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HENRY CLAY.

To almost any eye which surveys dispassionately the field of our National History during the last sixty or seventy years, the stately figure of HENRY CLAY will come at once and prominently into view. No American eye will ever overlook it. No American pen will ever attempt to dwarf or disparage it. All that Webster was to the North, all that Calhoun was to the South, Clay was to the Great West; perhaps more than all.

Neither of these three remarkable men ever commanded the votes of the whole country, or grasped the coveted prize of the Presidency. But together — sometimes in opposition, sometimes in conjunction, and almost always in rivalry — they exercised an influence on public affairs far greater than that of any other three men of their times. They did not leave their peers. Thus far they have had no successors of equal individuality, prominence, and power.

Their last signal public efforts were made, side by side, in the Senate of the United States, in support of what were called the Compromises of 1850. Before two years more had elapsed, they were all three in their graves. Had their lives been prolonged, in health and strength,

for another decade, the civil war might haply have been averted. Calhoun's doctrines of nullification and secession may have pointed and even led the way to that war, but he had far too much of that "wisdom which dwelleth with prudence" to have prompted or sanctioned it; while the giant arms of Webster and Clay would have held it in check as long as they lived. No other statesmen of that period had the prestige and the power to repress and arrest the strife of sections and of tongues which gradually brought on the struggle of arms, even had they desired to do so. The part, if not the art, of those who came after them, in all quarters of the land, seems rather to have been, consciously or unconsciously, to provoke and precipitate that terrible conflict between the North and the South, which was destined, by the good providence of God, to decide the question whether the American Union was strong enough to outlast the overthrow of African Slavery, and to maintain itself against all comers, domestic or foreign. All the world now rejoices in that decision, though all the world may not have sympathized with the spirit in which it was prosecuted, or in the precise steps by which it was reached. Henry Clay, certainly, would never have recognized such a conflict, in advance, as "irrepressible," nor ever have relaxed his efforts to preserve the Union without the effusion of fraternal blood.

In yielding to the call for a memoir of this great statesman, as a contribution to the present volume, I am well aware how utterly impracticable it will be to condense into a few pages any adequate notice of so long and varied a life. The most that can be attempted, or certainly the most that can be accomplished, is a cursory sketch of a grand career, with such personal reminiscences as may be recalled by one, who was in the way of witnessing, personally, no inconsiderable part at least of its later stages. It may serve as an index, if nothing more, for those who

are disposed to study his character and life more minutely hereafter. Mr. Clay, fortunately or unfortunately, was not of a nature to take any particular pains to keep the record of his own words or thoughts or acts, and he may thus fare less well with posterity than many of his inferiors. But his Life and Speeches have been worked up by others in at least two separate forms of two volumes each, and his Private Correspondence has been collected in still another volume; while the Debates, and Journals, and Annals of Congress, and the pages of almost every biographical dictionary, contain ample reports and details of his sayings and doings.

Born in Hanover County, Virginia, in a neighborhood called "The Slashes," on the 12th of April, 1777, — less than a year after the Declaration of American Independence, — he would seem to have imbibed with his mother's milk the bold, independent spirit which pervaded the Colonies at that critical period. Bereaved of his father when only four years of age, he was left to pick up such crumbs of education as could be found on the earthen floor of a log school-house, under the tuition of a master of intemperate habits. The only tradition of his early childhood presents him on a bare-backed pony, with a rope-halter instead of a bridle, riding fearlessly and sometimes furiously, to a neighboring mill, to replenish his mother's meal-bag as often as it was empty. And thus young Harry became famous for twenty miles the country round about, as "the Mill Boy of the Slashes,"— a nickname which served his supporters a good turn afterwards, in more than one presidential campaign. We trace him next to Richmond, keeping accounts in a retail variety shop. But not long afterwards we find him employed as a copyist for the Clerk of the Courts and the Attorney-General of the State, and as an occasional amanuensis for the illustrious Virginian Chancellor, George Wythe. In these relations he must have acquired the singularly neat

and almost feminine hand, which may be seen alike in his earlier and later autographs. He was never one of those statists, of whom Shakspeare tells us, who "held it a baseness to write fair." In these relations, too, he undoubtedly became imbued with that love of legal study, on which he entered seriously at nineteen years of age, and which he prosecuted so successfully as to obtain a license to practise law before he was twenty-one. Above all, in these relations he acquired the friendship and confidence of George Wythe, who was not only one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence and a distinguished member of the Virginia Convention which ratified the Federal Constitution, of which he was an earnest advocate and supporter, but who signalized his love of human freedom by emancipating all his negroes before his own death, and making provision for their subsistence. The influence of such a friendship and such an example could hardly fail to manifest itself in the future life of any one who enjoyed it. It was better than an education.

Young Clay, however, was not destined to remain long within the immediate reach of that influence, as, some years before the death of the great Chancellor, he had removed from Richmond and entered on a new scene of life. His mother, who had been married again after a widowhood of ten years, had changed her residence to Kentucky, then a new Commonwealth, just separated from Virginia, whither her son, who was devotedly attached to her, soon followed, and opened a law office in Lexington. Thenceforward he was to be known as the Great Kentuckian. Thenceforward the gallant young State, with whose earliest fortunes he had thus identified himself, was to have no more brilliant orator, no more distinguished statesman, no more beloved and devoted citizen, than Henry Clay.

Entering her Legislature, as the representative of Fayette County, in 1803, at twenty-six years of age, he so

commended himself to the favor and confidence of his fellow-members, that, before three years had elapsed, he was chosen by them to fill a vacancy in the Senate of the United States; and, if the tradition be correct, he actually took his seat in that exalted body before he had quite attained the age of thirty, prescribed by the Constitution of the United States.

While welcoming Mr. Clay to Boston, as Chairman of a Young Men's Committee, in the autumn of 1833, I found that he was indisposed to have this early breach of Constitutional requirements alluded to, or inquired into, with too much particularity. "I think, my young friend," said he, "we may as well omit any reference to my supposed juvenile indiscretions." He was then of an age to pride himself more on his ardent devotion to the Constitution, than on any precocious personal popularity, or any premature political advancement.

This first term of service at Washington was a brief one, ending with the existing session. But it did not expire until he had made his mark on the national calendar as an earnest and powerful advocate of internal improvements. During the following year, he had returned to the Legislature of Kentucky, and was chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives of that State. But in 1809, he was again sent to Washington, to fill another vacancy in the United States Senate, where he served with distinction for two years. And now, in 1811, he enters the field of a still more conspicuous and responsible service, having been elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, almost by acclamation, on the very first day of his taking his seat as a member of that body.

Mr. Clay was six times elected Speaker of the House, and held that lofty position longer than any one in the history of our country, before or since. No abler or more commanding presiding officer has ever sat in a

Speaker's Chair on either side of the Atlantic. Prompt, dignified, resolute, fearless, he had a combination of intellectual and physical qualities which made him a natural ruler over men. There was a magnetism in his voice and manner which attracted the willing attention, acquiescence, and even obedience, of those over whom he presided. He was no painstaking student of Parliamentary Law, but found the rules of his governance more frequently in his own instinctive sense of what was practicable and proper, than in Hatsell's Precedents, or in Jefferson's Manual. He was, in some sense, a law unto himself, and could he have bent himself to compose or compile a Code of Proceeding for the House over which he presided, its Rules and Orders might have escaped the chaotic confusion from which so many vain efforts have been made of late years to extricate them.

He betrayed to me one of the characteristic secrets of his success, more than thirty years afterwards, when I had the honor of occupying the same Chair. "I have attentively observed your course as Speaker," said he to me one day, most kindly, "and I have heartily approved it. But let me give you one hint from the experience of the oldest survivor of your predecessors. *Decide — decide promptly — and never give your reasons for the decision.* The House will sustain your decisions, but there will always be men to cavil and quarrel about your reasons."

Mr. Clay's terms of the Speakership, beginning in 1811 and ending in 1825, were more than once interrupted by other and not less important public avocations. He resigned the Chair in January, 1814, on his appointment, by President Madison, as one of the Five Commissioners to Ghent, to negotiate the treaty which resulted in the peace between Great Britain and the United States in 1815. John Quincy Adams, Albert Gallatin, Jonathan Russell, and the elder James A. Bayard, were his colleagues in that memorable negotiation. No one has ever

questioned the great importance of Mr. Clay's services on that Commission. He had been the leader of the War Party on the floor of Congress, and had been more instrumental than any other man in bringing about the Declaration of War. His duties as Speaker never prevented him from taking an active part in the debates when the House was in Committee of the Whole, and his voice at that period was as commanding on the floor as it was in the Chair. So ardent and strenuous was he in demanding that the rights of his country on the ocean should be vindicated, and the wrongs of her sailors and her trade redressed, even by an appeal to arms, and so much confidence did he inspire in his own readiness, courage, and capacity to take any part which might be assigned to him in the conduct of the war which he advocated, that President Madison is well understood to have contemplated, at one moment, offering him the command of the American Army. Clay had many of the attributes of a great soldier, and might perchance have won as distinguished a name in the field as he did in the forum. But the higher and nobler offices of peace were happily reserved for him, and he for them.

Re-elected to the Speakership, on his return from Ghent, he resigned it again in 1820, owing to the pressure of his private affairs; but he retained his seat as a member of the House, and took a leading part, from time to time, in the great "Missouri Compromise" debate of that period. Indeed, to him, more than to any other man, has always been ascribed the passage of that memorable measure, — one of the landmarks of American History, — which limited Slavery by the latitude of 36° 30′. Mr. Benton, in his "Thirty Years' View," says: "Mr. Clay has been often complimented as the author of the Compromise of 1820, in spite of his repeated declaration to the contrary; but he is the undisputed author of the final settlement of the Missouri Controversy in the actual ad-

mission of the State." That was the first great controversy which threatened to bring about the establishment of geographical parties, so emphatically deprecated by Washington in his Farewell Address, — parties divided by a Slavery and Anti-Slavery line, and "squinting," if not looking directly, towards a dissolution of the Union, or an attempt to dissolve it by civil war. It is, however, a most striking fact in our subsequent political history, that the Compromise thus effected, and which was so vehemently opposed and denounced by the great mass of the Northern people and their Representatives at the time, came at last, in the process of time and chance and change, to be counted as one of the special securities and safeguards of the Free States against the unlimited extension of Slavery, and that its mad repeal was the subject of even more indignant and violent agitation and remonstrance by the North, in 1854, than its original adoption had been, in 1820. Few persons who knew Mr. Clay will hesitate to say that it never would have been repealed, had he survived, in health and strength, to take part in the controversies of that day. Douglas would not have dared to propose it in his presence. And no one can fail to perceive and admit that the immediate result of that repeal was precisely what its passage was designed to prevent, — the formation of geographical parties, with a fatal inclination, as it proved, towards civil war.

It was during the last days of the debate on this Missouri Bill, in 1821, that Mr. Clay was wrought up to such a pitch of impatience and impetuosity, that, having been twice thwarted by the technical ruling of his successor in the Chair, he was heard vociferating in tones that none but he could command: "Then I move to suspend *all* the rules of the House — Away with them! Is it to be endured that we shall be trammelled in our action by mere forms and technicalities at a moment like this, when the peace, and perhaps the existence, of the Union is at

stake?" It was well said by one of his best friends, that he carried his point literally by storm.

Mr. Clay was once more elected Speaker in 1823, and held the Chair during the whole of the Eighteenth Congress. At its close, in 1825, he was called to enter on a new field of service, as Secretary of State to President John Quincy Adams. His appointment to that office, and his ready acceptance of it, gave occasion to a barefaced charge of "bargain and corruption," which occupied no small space, for several years, among the partisan criminations and clamors of the period. No one in these days would give a second sober thought to such a charge. The characters of the two men, as now universally recognized, are a sufficient refutation of the scandal; while the more recent examples of trading and "dickering" in public offices, both State and National, have left this stale allegation against Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams — even if it had not been long ago exploded as false and groundless — altogether too small and insignificant a matter to be recalled, except in the way of renewed warning that the brightest names may for the moment be maliciously tarnished. "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny."

It may not be without interest to recall what Mr. Adams himself said on the subject, in reply to a complimentary address or letter at the close of his administration in 1829. "Upon Mr. Clay," said he, "the foulest slanders have been showered. Long known and appreciated, as successively a member of both branches of your National Legislature, as the unrivalled Speaker, and, at the same time, most efficient leader of debates in both of them, as an able and successful negotiator for your interests in war and in peace with foreign powers, and as a powerful candidate for the highest of your trusts, the Department of State itself was a station which, by its bestowal, could confer neither profit nor honor upon him, but upon which

he has shed unfading honor by the manner in which he has discharged its duties. Prejudice and passion have charged him with obtaining that office by bargain and corruption. Before you, my fellow-citizens, in the presence of our country and of Heaven, I pronounce that charge totally unfounded. This tribute of justice is due from me to him, and I seize with pleasure the opportunity, offered me by your letter, of discharging the obligation.

"As to my motives for tendering to him the Department of State when I did, let that man who questions them come forward. Let him look around among statesmen and legislators of this nation and of this day. Let him then select and name the man whom, by his pre-eminent talents, by his splendid services, by his ardent patriotism, by his all-embracing public spirit, by his fervid eloquence in behalf of the rights and liberties of mankind, by his long experience in the affairs of the Union, foreign and domestic, — a President of the United States, intent only upon the honor and welfare of his country, ought to have preferred to Henry Clay. Let him name the man, and then judge you, my fellow-citizens, of my motives."

In immediate connection with this grand testimony and tribute by Mr. Adams, it may be well to recall, also, what Mr. Clay himself said to his own fellow-citizens and friends at Lexington, in 1842: "I defy my enemies to point out any act or instance of my life in which I have sought the attainment of office by dishonorable or unworthy means. Did I display inordinate ambition when, under the administration of Mr. Madison, I declined a foreign mission of the first grade, and an executive department, both of which he successively and kindly tendered to me? or when, under that of his successor, Mr. Monroe, I was first importuned (as no one knows better than that sterling old patriot, Jonathan Robbins, now threatened, as the papers tell us, with expulsion from an office which was never filled with more honesty and uprightness, because

he declines to be a servile instrument) to accept a secretaryship, and was afterwards offered a *carte blanche* of all the foreign missions? At the epoch of the election of 1825, I believe no one doubted at Washington that, if I had felt it my duty to vote for General Jackson, he would have invited me to take charge of a department. And such, undoubtedly, Mr. Crawford would have done if he had been elected."

This is a most important piece of autobiography, and supplies facts in Mr. Clay's career which might not have been obtained from any other source than his own confessions and assertions.

And now it may well be questioned whether the foreign relations of our country have ever been under the control of more accomplished and capable men than when John Quincy Adams was President, with Henry Clay as his Secretary of State. Mr. Adams, we need not say, was thoroughly versed in diplomacy, having been our Minister at several Courts successively, including Berlin, St. Petersburg, and London, before he was Secretary of State for eight years under President Monroe. Mr. Clay, meantime, as we have already seen, had been associated with him at Ghent, and had exhibited the highest sagacity and ability in the discussion and direction of our policy towards other countries, South American and European, as a member of Congress. Together they combined the largest experience, and the greatest vigilance, energy, and skill. The treaties negotiated by Mr. Clay, during his term of four years, are believed to have exceeded in number all that had been negotiated by other Secretaries during the previous thirty-five years of our constitutional history.

The period was one of peculiar interest, in view of the great political changes which were taking place in our own American hemisphere. Brazil, in 1825, was finally severed from Portuguese dominion, and Buenos Ayres, Colombia, Mexico, Chili, Central America, and Peru were

just assuming their positions as independent nations. The colonial connection between America and Europe was thus in process of complete dissolution. The Panama Congress was in immediate prospect, and Mr. Clay's instructions and letters on that subject are among the most interesting and notable State Papers in our archives. As a representative in Congress, in 1818, 1820, and 1822, he had, indeed, taken the lead in urging upon our Government the immediate recognition of the new South American States, then struggling bravely to establish and maintain their independence, and in assuring them of the warm sympathy of our own Republic. He was earlier than George Canning himself, in "calling them into being." Richard Rush, in writing to him from London, in 1825, where he was then our Minister, justly criticises the arrogant self-laudation of Mr. Canning on this subject, — which Earl Grey had only ridiculed as a "frivolous and empty boast," — and says: "If Earl Grey had been better informed he would have said that it was *you* who did most to call them into being. . . . The South Americans owe to *you*, more than to any other man in either hemisphere, their independence, — you having led the way to our acknowledgment of it. This is truth, — this is history. Without our acknowledgment of it, England would not have taken the step to this day." Mr. Clay was thus ready and resolved, on assuming the portfolio of Secretary of State, to enter into treaties with these new republics at the earliest moment, and Mr. Adams was no less resolved and ready for such a step.

Retiring from public service at the close of Mr. Adams's administration in 1829, Mr. Clay now returned to his Kentucky home and to his lawyer's office at Lexington. His health, however, had of late been by no means satisfactory. Indeed, as early as April, 1828, Mr. Adams is found saying in his recently published Diary or Memoirs: "Mr. Clay told me that the state of his health was such that he

should be compelled to resign his office. It was becoming impossible for him to discharge its duties, and he could not consent to hold an office without discharging its duties. . . . His weakness was constantly increasing. His disorder is a general decay of the vital powers, a paralytic torpidity and numbness, which began at the lower extremity of his left limb, and from the foot has gradually risen up the leg, and now approaches the hip. . . . Governor Barbour and Mr. Southard spoke of the condition of Mr. Clay's health, and Mr. Southard said he doubted whether he would live a month longer." It is not surprising, therefore, to find him opening his first speech in the Senate of the United States, after his return to Washington, in January, 1832, by saying: "I am getting old. I feel but too sensibly and unaffectedly the effects of approaching age." But he had then hardly reached his fifty-fifth year. Great efforts were still before him, and he was soon involved in some of the most momentous and exciting controversies of his life. His speeches on "The American System," on the distribution of the proceeds of the Public Lands, on the rechartering of the United States Bank, on the removal of the Government Deposits from that Bank, on the Sub-Treasury Scheme, and on other important measures of public policy, domestic and foreign, followed each other at no long intervals between 1832 and 1842, showing no diminished power or flagging energies, and now filling a whole volume of his collected works. But, early in this period, he signalized himself especially as the proposer and advocate of what is known historically as "The Compromise Tariff of 1833," when he brought his marvellous parliamentary skill and practical tact once more to the rescue of the peace of the country, and the prevention of civil war.

It was the period of South Carolina Nullification, and although Webster's immortal reply to Hayne, and General Jackson's grand Union Proclamation, had left no doubt on

which side the weight of argument and the preponderance of power were to be found, South Carolina was neither convinced nor intimidated, and there was serious reason for apprehending that she and some of her sister Southern States were willing and eager to plunge the nation into a rash and wanton conflict of arms. Whatever differences of opinion there may have been at the time, or may be still, as to the expediency of Mr. Clay's interposition, or as to the precise measure by which it was accomplished, history will never fail to bear witness to the patriotism, the skill, and the unsurpassed power, with which he devised and carried through his conciliatory policy in that emergency. In 1833, as in 1820, he was the Great Pacificator of the country. To him, certainly, more directly than to any other one man, the country was thus a second time indebted for the preservation of its domestic peace.

During the last two years of this decade, between the lamented death of President Harrison and the spring of 1842, Mr. Clay was incessantly engaged, in the Senate, in combating the course of President Tyler, who, as he maintained, had betrayed the party by which he was chosen Vice-President, and had taken advantage of an accidental succession to the Executive Chair to thwart and veto the very measures which he was virtually pledged to sanction. No one can recall those years without regretting the arbitrary and imperious spirit which Mr. Clay occasionally exhibited at that period, nor yet without admitting and admiring the masterly manner in which he led his party in Congress, from step to step, and from day to day. If his indignation sometimes got the better of his discretion, there are those who think that it found ample apology in the circumstances of the case. But he became weary at last of so much ineffectual strife, and, on the 31st of March, 1842, he withdrew from the Senate, as he thought and said, "finally and for ever." In his Valedictory Ad-

dress to the Senate, delivered on that day, which was quite a field-day, and certainly a most dramatic as well as historical occasion, he used the following apologetic language: "That my nature is warm, my temper ardent, my disposition, especially in relation to the public service, enthusiastic, I am fully ready to own; and those who suppose that I have been assuming the dictatorship have only mistaken for arrogance or assumption that fervent ardor and devotion which is natural to my constitution, and which I may have displayed with too little regard to cold, calculating, and cautious prudence, in sustaining and zealously supporting the measures of policy which I have presented and proposed." His frank and chivalrous bearing overcame his opponents, — he had no enemies to be overcome, — and both Congress and the whole country felt deeply that a great and almost irreparable void had been created in the National Councils. There was a general willingness at the instant that he should have a temporary rest and relaxation after such continuous and exhausting labors; but a growing and widening sentiment was soon manifested, in every quarter, that so much experience, ability, and patriotism could not be altogether spared from the public service.

And now, at last, Mr. Clay seemed to be in a fair way to receive that national recognition and promotion of which he had been so long ambitious, and which he so eminently deserved. He had, indeed, received the electoral votes of Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri, with four votes from the Electoral College of New York, as long ago as the Presidential Election of 1824; and again, in 1832, six States had cast their electoral votes for him, — forty-nine votes in all. But now, in 1844, he was formally nominated as the candidate of the great Whig Party of the United States, and with a Democratic candidate opposed to him, whose name was hardly remembered out of his own neighborhood, and who had little or nothing of

personal weight or prestige in the nation at large. The result of the election afforded the first example, so often reproduced in later years, of the advantage enjoyed by a candidate who has said little, done little, and made few enemies, over one who has been constantly in the public eye, never shrinking from responsibility, and never failing to take a decided part in every controversy. Indeed, no more serious discouragement to great abilities and great services, as qualifications and recommendations for high office, was ever experienced than in the preference given to Mr. Polk over Mr. Clay in 1844. The country has never recovered from the pernicious influence of that example. Nor were the immediate practical consequences of the result less mischievous. The Mexican War, to name nothing else, was among the first fruits of Mr. Clay's defeat, and not a few of those who opposed him, on anti-slavery or free-soil grounds, saw too late what might have been prevented by his election.

The excellent Theodore Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, was the candidate for the Vice-Presidency on the ticket with Mr. Clay. An extract from his letter to Mr. Clay, dated from New York, the morning after the election, Nov. 9, 1844, will afford a vivid and just idea of the impression produced by the result, as well as of the manner in which it was accomplished: —

"My dear Sir, — I address you this morning with very different feelings from my expectations a few weeks ago. The alliance of the foreign vote, and that most impracticable of all organizations, the Abolitionists, have defeated the strongest national vote ever given to a presidential candidate. The Whigs in this city and State have struggled most nobly. All classes of American citizens have ardently, cordially, and with the freest sacrifices, contended for your just claims to patriotic confidence; and could you this morning behold the depression of spirits and sinking of hearts that pervade the community, I am sure that you would feel, 'Well, in very truth, my defeat has been the occasion of a more precious tribute and vindication than even the majority of numbers.'

"The Abolitionists were inimically obstinate, and seemed resolved to distinguish their importance, right or wrong. The combination of adverse circumstances has often struck me in the progress of the canvass. At the South, I was denounced as an Abolitionist, rank and uncompromising. Here, the Abolitionists have been rancorous in their hostility. A short time since, William Jay (of illustrious name) assailed me in his Anti-Slavery prints, by a harsh, unchristian, and intolerant article, in the form of a letter addressed to me, but sent to the winds. Its object was, no doubt, to drive the party together, and it had, I suppose, some influence that way, although it was too bitter and irrational to accomplish much. And then the foreign vote was tremendous. More than three thousand, it is confidently said, have been naturalized in this city alone, since the first of October. It is an alarming fact, that this foreign vote has decided the great questions of American policy, and counteracted a nation's gratitude.

"But, my dear Sir, leaving this painful subject, let us look away to brighter and better prospects, and surer hopes, in the promises and consolations of the Gospel of our Saviour. . . .

"I remain, with sincere esteem and best wishes,

"Your friend,

"THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN."

John Quincy Adams, too, writing to Mr. Clay from Washington, on the following 4th of January, says as follows: —

"I have yet to acknowledge the receipt of a very kind and friendly letter from you, written shortly before the unexpected and inauspicious issue of the recent presidential election. It has been, on many accounts, painful to me; but on none more, or so much, as on the dark shade which it has cast upon our prospects of futurity.

"I had hoped that under your guidance the country would have recovered from the downward tendency into which it has been sinking. But the glaring frauds by which the election was consummated afford a sad presentiment of what must be expected hereafter. We must hope that a merciful Providence will yet preside over the destinies of our country, and avert the calamities with which she is threatened."

Mr. Clay remained in contented retirement for four or five years after this defeat, but, in 1849, he suffered himself to be once more elected to the Senate of the United States, and took his seat in that body again as a member of the Thirty-first Congress. That brave old soldier and sterling patriot, Zachary Taylor, had just then been inaugurated as President, and the great controversies connected with the admission of California as a State, the organization of the Territories of New Mexico and Utah, and the Fugitive Slave Law, were close at hand. Mr. Clay was now on the verge of the seventy-third year of his age, and might have been pardoned for assuming the *rôle* of an adviser and counsellor, rather than that of a leader in debate. But it was not in his nature to spare himself, or to play a second part. He could not see a difficulty without making an attempt to solve it, and he always preferred to propose measures of his own, rather than to fall in to the support of what had been devised and concerted by others. There were those among the public men of that day who believed, and there are some who still believe, that if he had looked with more favor on the policy of General Taylor, and had found it consistent with his own convictions to lend his powerful and pre-eminent influence to the support of that policy, the country might have been carried through the crisis which was upon it with less agitation and less turbulence, and that fewer questions might have remained to excite and exasperate the contending sections of the Union.

But no one will question the earnest patriotism which governed his course, or fail to appreciate the ability, energy, and eloquence, which he displayed in this last great controversy of his life. The old fire was once more kindled in his veins, and, looking back to the days when he had saved the peace of the country in 1820, and again in 1833, by masterly measures of compromise, he did not doubt for a moment that it was reserved for him still

again to invoke successfully a spirit of conciliation and concord, and to arrange a scheme of adjustment which should not only avert the dangers of civil war at the moment, but leave all vexed questions in a safe and settled state for the future. The bill which he prepared for this purpose, and which embraced under a single enacting clause, the admission of California as a State, with Territorial organizations for New Mexico and Utah, without any Wilmot Proviso, or restriction as to Slavery, together with an arrangement of the disputed boundaries of Texas, — and which, from the variety and multiplicity of its provisions, was derisively known as "The Omnibus," — failed of its passage in the form in which it was originally presented. It was taken to pieces, bit by bit, in the Senate, until nothing but Utah remained of it. But the scattered fragments were gathered up separately in both branches, and were finally enacted. With them, or immediately after them, the Fugitive Slave Bill, also, but not in the form or with the provisions which he had proposed, became a law. Not one of the great leaders of parties in the Senate voted on that bill. Calhoun was dead. Webster was in the State Department. The names of Cass, Benton, Douglas, Dickinson, and Seward, are absent from the roll. Mr. Clay himself did not remain in Washington to take part in the passage of this measure, or to witness the successive steps by which his measures were finally adopted. He had overtasked his strength in battling for them in the aggregate, during the winter, spring, and midsummer heats, of that memorable session; and, as soon as the fate of his original Bill was sealed, he resorted to Newport to repair his exhausted energies. Not, however, until he had made a speech which will be noticed presently. He returned before the close of the session, and was again in his seat during the following session. Meantime, he had made a visit to Havana, and to New Orleans, in hope of shaking off his cough and reinvigorat-

ing his system. But he soon found himself disabled for taking further active part in the duties of the Senate, and sent in his resignation to take effect on the 6th of September, 1852. When that day arrived, he had been in his grave for more than two months, having died in Washington, on the previous 29th of June, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Mr. Clay, as we have seen, was associated distinctly and prominently, in his early political life, with the Democratic party of Jefferson and Madison; and even after the administration of President Monroe had ushered in what was called "the era of good feeling," and the old party lines were somewhat effaced, he would still have counted himself nothing but a Democrat. But new issues and new interests were developed by the war with England, and he soon became identified with the advocacy of a Protective Tariff, Internal Improvements, and the general policy which was designated by him as "The American System," and of which he was the acknowledged author and father. He was thus gradually alienated from many of his Democratic associates, or they from him, while he at once assumed a foremost place among those who, after bearing the name of National Republicans for a few years, became known to the country and the world as Whigs. Mr. Clay was, indeed, emphatically the leader of what is now spoken of historically as the Old Whig Party of the United States. Even Webster, with all the surpassing power which he brought to its support, could hardly at any time have contested the leadership with him, even had he been disposed to do so. Webster was, indeed, its local, New England, head and pride. But take the country through, — North, South, East, and West, — Clay was acknowledged and recognized as its chief. He was its candidate for the Presidency while it was yet in embryo, in 1832, and again, after it was fully fledged, in 1844. And though he failed of the nomination in 1839 and

1848, he was still the most influential member of the party by which General Harrison and General Taylor were elected Presidents of the United States. The witches might have whispered to Clay, as they did to Banquo, "Thou shalt make Presidents, though thou be none." Certainly, if the Old Whig Party is to have any individual impersonation in history, it must find it in Henry Clay of Kentucky, and by him, and his general principles and policy, it may well consent to be judged.

And what was this Whig Party which he led so gallantly, before disappointed ambition, and inconsiderate philanthropy, and headlong fanaticism, and secret "Know-nothing lodges," and corrupt coalitions, at one end of the Union, conspired with mad and monstrous schemes in the interests of African Slavery at the other end, — Kansas, Nebraska, and the rest, — to draw off so many of its members into new ranks, and doom it to a lingering death? What was the party of which Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were so long the shining lights, and of which Abraham Lincoln, to name no other name, was long one of the lesser luminaries? It was a Constitutional Union Party, which regarded the Union of the States, and the Constitution, as the only formal condition and bond of that Union, things to be reverenced and maintained at all hazards. It was a Law and Order Party, which tolerated no revolutionary or riotous processes of reform. It was a Party of principle and purity, which consented to no corruption or traffic as a means of securing office or success. It was a Conservative Party and yet a Party of Progress, which looked to the elevation of American labor, and the advancement of our national welfare, by a discriminating adjustment and an equitable collection of duties on imports, by an honest currency, by a liberal administration of the public lands, and by needful appropriations, from time to time, for the improvement of rivers and harbors. It was a Party of Peace, —

domestic peace and foreign peace, — opposed to every lawless scheme of encroachment or aggrandizement, at home or abroad, and studiously avoiding whatever might occasion internal commotion or external conflict. It was, above all things, a National Party, extending over the whole country, and systematically renouncing and repudiating all merely sectional organizations or issues.

Such a party could, of course, have no common creed or platform on the subject of African Slavery, as that was a subject then everywhere acknowledged to be utterly beyond the pale of constitutional legislation, and of which the regulation and the very existence were wholly within the reserved rights of the separate States. This was most signally affirmed even as late as 1861, — after Mr. Lincoln had been elected President by the Republican Party, — by solemn resolutions of a great majority of Congress, and even by the adoption of a proposed amendment to the Constitution, to give fresh emphasis and stronger enforcement to the original guaranties of that instrument. The abolition of Slavery, as we all know, could never have been legitimately accomplished by the nation, except as it actually was at last accomplished, — under the powers derived from the exigencies of war. But war, and especially civil war, was the evil of all others which Mr. Clay and the Whig Party were most earnest in deprecating, and most zealous in striving to avert.

Mr. Clay, however, though a Southern man, was, as he said openly, in the Senate and elsewhere, "no friend to Slavery." He recognized its wrongs from his earliest maturity, and rendered himself obnoxious to the popular indignation in Kentucky by vainly urging the adoption of a gradual emancipation clause in her first State Constitution in 1798, — a provision which he is well understood to have counselled anew on the revision of her Constitution as late as 1849–50. He gave noble utter-

ance to his feelings on this subject, in 1827, in a speech at the Annual Meeting of the American Colonization Society, of which he was so long the President, when he said: "If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain upon the character of our country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it by foreign nations; if I could only be instrumental in ridding of this foul blot that revered State which gave me birth, or that not less beloved State which kindly adopted me as her son, — I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy, for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror."

And when, at last, in 1839, he felt constrained to take a stand in the Senate against the course of the Abolitionists of that period, he clearly manifested that the dangers to the Union, and the perils of civil war, were the considerations which inspired and controlled his course. "Sir," said he, "I am not in the habit of speaking lightly of the possibility of dissolving this happy Union. The Senate knows that I have deprecated allusions, on ordinary occasions, to that direful event. The country will testify that, if there be any thing in the history of my public career worthy of recollection, it is the truth and sincerity of my ardent devotion to its lasting preservation. But we should be false in our allegiance to it, if we did not discriminate between the imaginary and real dangers by which it may be assailed. Abolition should no longer be regarded as an imaginary danger. The Abolitionists, let me suppose, succeed in their present aim of uniting the inhabitants of the Free States as one man, against the inhabitants of the Slave States. Union on the one side will beget union on the other. And this process of reciprocal consolidation will be attended with all the violent prejudices, embittered passions, and implacable animosities, which ever degraded or deformed human nature. A virtual dissolution of the Union will have taken place,

whilst the forms of its existence remain. The most valuable element of union, mutual kindness, the feelings of sympathy, the fraternal bonds, which now happily unite us, will have been extinguished for ever. One section will stand in menacing and hostile array against the other. The collision of opinion will be quickly followed by the clash of arms. I will not attempt to describe scenes which now happily lie concealed from our view. Abolitionists themselves would shrink back in dismay and horror at the contemplation of desolated fields, conflagrated cities, murdered inhabitants, and the overthrow of the fairest fabric of human government that ever rose to animate the hopes of civilized man."

Such were the prophetic fears and forebodings of as brave a statesman as ever breathed, in view of the attempt to array sectional parties against each other on the single question of Slavery; and the history of the last fifteen or twenty years has shown that they were by no means groundless fears or exaggerated forebodings. They were such as might well have weighed heavily on the heart of so ardent a patriot as Henry Clay, and they furnish an ample explanation of his untiring efforts in the cause of conciliation and compromise. Nothing could be more unjust than to stigmatize him as a Pro-Slavery man, or the Whig Party as a Pro-Slavery Party. There is not a shadow of truth in the charge that either that party or its great leader ever prostrated themselves before what was called the Slave Power. Individual members of the party, at the South or at the North, may have said or done things to give color to such a charge. But from its earliest organization down even to those last discouraging campaigns in 1852 and 1856 and 1860, when Clay and Webster were dying or dead, and when Winfield Scott and Millard Fillmore and John Bell and Edward Everett were successively its candidates for the Presidency or the Vice-Presidency, no such alle-

gation against the Whig Party would have been just or true. It was the Constitution, the Union, and Peace as the best hope of both, which inspired their policy and actuated their course. Among the Whigs in the Free States there were men as earnest and as sincere in their hatred of Slavery and in their hopes for its ultimate extinction, as any of those who made louder professions and who hastened to unite themselves with distinctive Anti-Slavery parties; and even among its members in the Southern States there were not a few, like Mr. Clay himself, who would eagerly have joined in any measures looking towards gradual emancipation, which should not have involved the violation of the Constitution, the dissolution of the Union, and civil war. Mr. Clay's personal love of human freedom was recognized by William Ellery Channing — one of whose impressive sermons I took him to hear, at the old Federal Street Church, in 1833 — when he addressed to him his letter against the Annexation of Texas. It was recognized, too, by Joseph John Gurney, when he addressed to him his letters on Emancipation in the West Indies. He himself gave signal testimony to it, as we have seen, in relation to the Constitution of Kentucky, and in his devotion to that cause of Colonization, which Abraham Lincoln himself, while President of the United States, advocated and urged upon Congress and upon his Cabinet almost to the lamented end of his life. Nor should it be forgotten, in such a sketch as this, that, when the late William Lloyd Garrison was imprisoned in Baltimore, Henry Clay is understood to have made an immediate though unsuccessful effort to stand bail for his release.

Mr. Clay was a person of singularly fascinating address and magnetic qualities, attracting admirers and friends on every side. As he sometimes sauntered across the Senate Chamber, taking a pinch of snuff out of one friend's box, or offering his own box to another, he was a picture of

affability and nonchalance. He had the genial, jaunty air of Lord Palmerston, whose peer he would have been as a Cabinet Minister or in Parliament, had he chanced to have been born an Englishman or an Irishman, instead of an American. Like Palmerston, he could sometimes be "lofty and sour," and sometimes even rude, towards those who opposed him. He was so to Josiah Quincy, in 1813, as Edmund Quincy reminded us in his admirable Biography of his father. He was so towards Albert Gallatin, in 1832, as Henry Adams has more recently reminded us in his excellent Life of that eminent statesman. He was so to Rufus Choate, in 1841, in my own hearing, in the Senate Chamber. But he was never slow in explanation and apology, and cherished no malice or resentment towards any one. In his valedictory to the Senate, to which allusion has already been made, he nobly said: "I may have often inadvertently or unintentionally made use of language that has been offensive, and susceptible of injurious interpretation, towards my brother Senators. If there be any here who retain wounded feelings of injury or dissatisfaction produced on such occasions, I beg to assure them that I now offer the amplest apology for any departure on my part from the established rules of parliamentary decorum and courtesy." He had the Western, or it might as well be called the English, taste for the turf. John Randolph dared to allude to him as a "blackleg," in contrast to the "puritan" Adams, in connection with the charge of bargain and corruption. A duel was the consequence, which Mr. Clay, as well as his friends, always regretted, though neither party was injured. Those were the days when English and American celebrities alike, Canning and Castlereagh and Wellington, as well as Hamilton and Clay and Decatur, unhappily yielded to what was called the Code of Honor. His favorite recreation for many years was a game of whist, to which, at one period of his life, he was passionately

addicted, — not for the stakes, if there were any, but for the mere distraction and excitement of the game.

There is a tradition that while he was on a visit to Boston, in 1816, lodging at the old Exchange Coffee House in Congress Street, a servant rushed into the parlor, in which he was at the whist-table with a few gentlemen of the old school, and announced that the hotel was on fire. "Oh, there will be time enough, I think (cried Mr. Clay), to finish our game"; and finish it they did before the hotel was burned to the ground. A similar tradition was current in Washington at a later period, that while Mr. Clay was Speaker, he and his friends had passed a whole night at cards, and were still going on with their games when the hour was close at hand for the opening of the morning session of Congress. "Wait a few minutes, gentlemen," said Mr. Clay, "and I will wash my face and hands and run down to the House and call John W. Taylor to the chair, and then I will come back, and we will have another rubber." True or false, these stories have a characteristic flavor. Mr. Clay was a whole-souled man, who put his heart into whatever he set about. Whether it were a rubber of whist, or a canvass for the Presidency, or a compromise of contending sections, he was *totus in illis*. But, long before his death, I remember his saying that he had reduced his allowance of whist to a few hours on one evening of a week, when General Scott, and Bodisco, the hospitable Russian Minister, and perhaps Archer of Virginia, helped him to dispel the oppressive anxieties of the day.

He was one of the most frank and direct of men, — never concealing his opinions, nor ever shifting his course to catch a momentary breeze. He scorned to seek popularity or preferment by the non-committalism of which there was a great example in his day. Still less would he imitate those Alpine climbers who reach great heights only by following zigzag paths. A little more discreet

silence, a little more "masterly inactivity," or a little more zigzag, would have carried him into the Executive Chair more than once. But he contented himself with the noble declaration, "I had rather be right than be President," and persisted in pursuing as straight a path as that Pontick Sea, whose "compulsive course," as Shakspeare says, —

> "Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontick and the Hellespont."

No one requires to be told that Mr. Clay was a great orator. There was no art in his eloquence. He was as natural and as grand as Patrick Henry or Daniel O'Connell. His prepared speeches were generally his least successful efforts. His works will not be consulted, like Webster's, for profound constitutional arguments or convincing logic, nor yet for brilliant metaphors or illustrations. He was eminently a man of action, and might be taken as an example of the old definition of eloquence by its greatest ancient master, — "action, action, action." There was a wonderful energy in all his utterances when they came from the impulse of the moment. He had a large heart, a dauntless courage, quick perceptions, a commanding stature, a lofty and chivalrous bearing, an almost incomparable voice, and when called out by some immediate exigency, or stirred by some immediate emotion, or stung by some personal imputation, no orator of our land or of our age was more impressive or more powerful. He was not a man of much study or of great accomplishments or of general reading. The only book I ever heard him speak of with special admiration was Carlyle's Cromwell. He was in raptures with that, and was reading it from day to day during the stress of the Compromise contentions of 1850, and he seemed to be whetting his courage upon its pages for the warfare in which he was so strenuously engaged. He found in it

the record of a Will not more iron than his own, and recognized indomitable elements of character of which he could not have failed to be conscious. With a rich and ready command of language of his own, he was an infrequent quoter of other men's words or thoughts, and certainly no accumulator of elegant extracts for the adornment of his speeches. Indeed, he was proverbial for blundering over even the most familiar quotations from Shakspeare. The late George Evans of Maine, one of the ablest Senators ever sent to Washington by a State which may boast of a Peleg Sprague and a William Pitt Fessenden, or, indeed, by any other State in the Union, used to tell more than one amusing story of Mr. Clay's efforts in this line. "What is it," said Clay to him one day, "that Shakspeare says about a rose smelling as sweet — Write me down those lines, and be sure you get them exactly right, and let them be in a large legible hand." And so Mr. Evans having verified his memory, at Clay's request, by a resort to the Congressional Library, and having laid the lines in plain, bold letters on Mr. Clay's desk, —

> "What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
> By any other name would smell as sweet,"—

awaited the result. As the great statesman approached that part of his speech in which he was to apply them, there was an evident embarrassment. He fumbled over his notes for a while, then grasped the little copy with a convulsive effort, and at last ejaculated in despair: "A rose will smell the same, call it what you will." On another occasion he had fortified himself by recalling the exclamation of Hamlet, "Let the galled jade wince," — but it was only after saying "unhung" and "unstrung" that, on the third attempt, and by the prompting of a friend, he made the Senate Chamber ring with the true words, "our withers are unwrung."

I have heard Mr. Clay often, in the forum and at the

bar, in the Senate Chamber and in the Supreme-Court Room, as well as before larger or smaller popular assemblies; but I recall two occasions, widely different in character and widely distant from each other in date, which have left on my mind the deepest impression of that off-hand, natural, impulsive eloquence in which he was without a rival while he lived.

One of those occasions, to which I have alluded already, was as long ago as 1833, just after the passage of his Tariff Compromise, and when he had visited Boston under somewhat peculiar circumstances. I was brought into daily association with him as Chairman of the Young Men's Committee of Reception, and the first speech I ever made, after leaving college, was to welcome him to our city. He had steadfastly refused to make any formal speeches himself, and it was only a night or two before his departure that his lips were unsealed. The young men of Boston had offered him a pair of silver pitchers as a token of their admiration, and it was my privilege to present them to him. We had the drawing-rooms of the Tremont House for the occasion, and there were assembled in them many of our most distinguished citizens. Webster was there, among others, but the illness of his wife, or some other cause, compelled him to retire before the ceremonies had commenced. Some things had occurred, moreover, which were confidentially communicated to me, to excite Mr. Clay's feelings, and to make him eager for the opportunity of giving expression to emotions which had been long pent up. There were no reporters, and only fifty or sixty hearers, all told. The rooms were not spacious. He had not a note for reference, nor had he contemplated any thing but the briefest and most formal acknowledgment of the gift. But, whatever had kindled it, "the fire burned, and he spoke with his mouth." No lava from a long-closed crater could have rushed in a more impetuous torrent, and he

recalled to me at once John Adams's description of James Otis, as "a flame of fire." If walls ever had ears, according to the old proverb, those old ceilings of the Tremont House drawing-rooms would have been vocal and vibrating to the present hour with the utterances of that night. He described the considerations and circumstances under which he had introduced the Compromise Bill. He alluded emphatically to the opposition it had encountered in some New England quarters. He depicted the dangers of civil war which it had averted. He dwelt on the Union of the country as the best hope of freedom throughout the world. After the lapse of forty-six years, I dare not attempt to recall the precise words or thoughts which were addressed to me on that occasion. But the tones still ring in my ears, and I can only bear witness to an impressiveness of speech never exceeded, if ever equalled, within an experience of nearly half a century, during which I have listened to many of the greatest orators on both sides of the Atlantic, including Brougham and Peel, the late Lord Derby and Macaulay, Guizot, Thiers, and Gladstone.

The second occasion on which Mr. Clay's eloquence made so deep and lasting an impression on me was as late as the 1st of August, 1850, when I had the honor of being a member of the Senate with him. The Compromise Bill, which he had introduced, and for which he had battled so bravely for so many months, had been finally defeated in the Senate the day before, and a simple bill for the admission of California as a State was now under consideration. Wearied with work, exhausted by the heat, depressed by the failure of his cherished measure and by the apprehensions of danger for the country, Mr. Clay was just going to Newport for rest and recreation. But some expressions of a threatening character caught his ear, and on the instant he took the floor. Of this speech we fortunately have a running report in the "Congressional Globe," and the following extracts will give some faint idea of its character: —

"I wish only to say a few words. We have presented to the country a measure of peace, a measure of tranquillity; one which would have harmonized, in my opinion, all the discordant feelings which prevail. That measure has met with a fate not altogether unexpected, I admit, on my part, but one which, as it respects the country at large, I deplore extremely. For myself, personally, I have no cause of complaint. The majority of the Committee to which I belonged have done their duty, their whole duty, faithfully and perseveringly. If the measure has been defeated, it has been defeated by the extremists on the other side of the chamber and on this. I shall not proceed to inquire into the measure of responsibility which I incurred. All I mean to say upon that subject is, that we stand free and liberated from any responsibility of consequences. . . .

"Now, Mr. President, I stand here in my place, meaning to be unawed by any threats, whether they come from individuals or from States. I should deplore, as much as any man, living or dead, that arms should be raised against the authority of the Union, either by individuals or by States. But, after all that has occurred, if any one State, or a portion of the people of any State, choose to place themselves in military array against the Government of the Union, I am for trying the strength of the Government. [*Applause in the galleries, immediately suppressed by the Chair.*] I am for ascertaining whether we have got a Government or not, — practical, efficient, capable of maintaining its authority, and of upholding the powers and interests which belong to a Government. Nor, Sir, am I to be alarmed or dissuaded from any such course by intimations of the spilling of blood. If blood is to be spilt, by whose fault is it to be spilt? Upon the supposition, I maintain it will be by the fault of those who choose to raise the standard of disunion, and endeavor to prostrate this Government; and, Sir, when that is done, so long as it pleases God to give me a voice to express my sentiments, or an arm, weak and enfeebled as it may be by age, that voice and that arm will be on the side of my country, for the support of the general authority, and for the maintenance of the powers of this Union. [*Applause in the galleries.*]

"THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Order!

"MR. CLAY. Sir, I have done all, I am willing to do all, that is in the power of one man to do, to accommodate the differences of the country. I have not been attached to any given

form of settling our troubles and of restoring contentment to the Union. I was willing to take the measures united. I am willing now to pass them separate and distinct. . . . But whether passed or not, I repeat the sentiment, if resistance is attempted to any authority of the country by any State or any people of any State, I will raise my voice, my heart, my arm, in support of the common authority of the General Government. Nor am I apprehensive of this idea, that blood is to be shed. From the bottom of my heart, I hope that it never will be shed. But if it is shed, who will be chargeable with the effusion of human blood? Those who attempt to prostrate the general authority, to raise the standard of disunion, and to destroy this Union by force. God knows I deprecate such an attempt. But if it occurs, I will be among the last who will give up the effort to maintain the Union in its entire, full, and vigorous authority.

"Sir, these threats are not so alarming and so dangerous as gentlemen in their imagination may suppose. We have had an event of the kind in our history. When Washington was our President, — now sixty years ago, — the standard of insurrection was raised in the western part of Pennsylvania. The army of the United States moved forward for the purpose of subduing it. . . . But the insurgents then — as disunionists and traitors always will — fled from the approach of the flag of the Union, supported by the authority of the Union, and countenanced by the Father of the Union."

Mr. Clay rarely, if ever, produced a stronger impression at once of his power and of his patriotism, than in the entirely impromptu speech of which these extracts give but the feeblest idea. They are sufficient, however, to show what side he would have taken in any rebellion against the Union, whenever it should have occurred, and to give ample warrant for the expression of a conviction, that, had he lived, in health and strength, until 1861, and had the Whig Party survived and been in possession of the Government, the Rebellion which then occurred, if it had not been altogether repressed and arrested, would have been crushed under his lead, as surely as it was crushed by the Party which was then in power, — even

though the abolition of Slavery had been, as it proved to be at last, one of the necessities of the war. Indeed, it may safely be said henceforth, that the party in power, whichever and whatever it may be, will put down any rebellion which may arise in our land, from whatever cause or quarter, and will maintain the Government committed to its care, until, in the providence of God, that Government shall have been doomed to destruction. The Union never has depended, and never will depend, on the ascendancy of any particular Party. Washington, and the old Federal Party, as Mr. Clay said, put to flight the insurrectionists of Pennsylvania in 1794. Madison, and the old Democratic Party, would have effectively suppressed any rising in New England, in 1814, had the "Five Striped Flag" been any thing but a myth. The old Democratic Party, again, under President Andrew Jackson, in 1832, would have enforced and made good his memorable sentiment, — "The Union, it must be preserved," — had not Nullification been peaceably extinguished. The old Whig Party, with General Taylor, or with Fillmore, in the Executive Chair, and with Webster at the helm, would have been as sufficient for any rebellion at the North, — if the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law had involved the necessity of employing military force in other parts of the country besides Boston, — as President Lincoln and the Republican Party, happily proved themselves to be for the Great Rebellion at the South which it became their province to overcome. In other words, the people of the United States can be trusted to maintain, uphold, and defend their own institutions and their own Government, and will rally to their support in overwhelming masses, without distinction of party, as they did in 1861. It is an injustice to the people to claim the preservation of the Union at any time as a Party triumph; and such a claim tends only to throw doubt, at home and abroad, on its preservation hereafter.

Such, certainly, was the spirit of Henry Clay's noble defiance of parties and of sections, of individuals and of States, in 1850.

It was in fresh remembrance of the two speeches of Mr. Clay, which have thus been recalled, — the first and one of the last which I heard from his own lips, — that I used the following language in an address to the Alumni of Harvard University, in 1852, just after his death, which I may borrow in summing up this cursory account of him as an orator, and which will at least show that my judgment has not been newly formed : —

"I deem it to be no disparagement to any one, among the living or the dead, to express the opinion that, for immediate power over a deliberative or a popular audience, no man in our republic, since the republic has had a name or a being, has ever surpassed the great statesman of the West, over whom the grave is just closing. His words will not be referred to in future years, like those of some of his contemporaries, for profound expositions of permanent principles, or for luminous and logical commentaries upon the Constitution or the Laws. But for the deep impressiveness and almost irresistible fascination of his immediate appeals, for prompt, powerful, persuasive, commanding, soul-stirring eloquence, upon whatever theme was uppermost in his large, liberal, and patriotic heart, he has had no superior, and hardly an equal, in our country's history. Owing nothing to the schools, nothing to art or education, he has furnished a noble illustration of what may be accomplished by the fire of real genius, by the force of an indomitable will, by the energy of a constant and courageous soul, uttering itself through the medium of a voice whose trumpet tones will be among the cherished memories of all who ever heard it, and which God never gave to be the organ of any thing less than a master-mind."

Any notice of Mr. Clay's personal qualities and character would be incomplete without some reference to his religious relations. He was an outspeaking man on this, as on all other subjects ; and his own words and acts will afford the truest indication of his faith and feelings. His

language in the Senate of the United States, in 1832, — when a joint resolution to call upon the President of the United States to appoint a National Fast, on account of the Asiatic Cholera, which had extended its ravages to our own Continent, had met with opposition, — may well be recalled first in this connection.

"I am a member," said he, "of no religious sect, and I am not a professor of religion. I regret that I am not. I wish that I was, and trust that I shall be. I have, and always have had, a profound regard for Christianity, the religion of my fathers, and for its rites, its usages, and its observances. Among these, that which is proposed in this resolution has always commanded the respect of the good and the devout, and I hope it will obtain the concurrence of the Senate."

On the 29th of November, 1844, in the volume of his private correspondence, published some years after his death, we find the following expressions in a letter to a clergyman, who had written to offer him his sympathy on his defeat as the candidate for the Presidency: —

"I am greatly obliged by the desire you manifest that I should seek, in the resources of religion, consolation for all the vexations and disappointments of life. I hope you will continue your prayers for me, since I trust I am not altogether unworthy of them. I have long been convinced of the paramount importance of the Christian religion. I have, for many years, fervently sought its blessings. I shall persevere in seeking them, and I hope, ultimately, to attain a firm faith and confidence in its promises. There is nothing for which I feel so anxious. May God, in his infinite mercy, grant what I so ardently desire."

Two years and a half after the date of this letter, on the 22d of June, 1847, the Parish Register of Christ Church, Lexington, Kentucky, has the following record: "Henry Clay, of Ashland, was baptized." And the Episcopal Register of the Diocese of Kentucky adds: "He was confirmed by the Rt. Rev. B. B. Smith, D.D., in the

Chapel of Morrison College, Lexington, on Sunday the 18th of July, 1847, and became a communicant."

The baptism of Mr. Clay, at so late a period of his life, is sufficiently explained by the fact that his father was a Baptist clergyman, who died when he was but four years of age, and that thus, belonging to a religious denomination which rejected infant baptism, and bereaved of the parent who would have cared for its administration in later years, his attention had not been awakened to the subject.

The Bishop of Kentucky, by whom he was confirmed, —the Right Reverend Benjamin Bosworth Smith, D.D.,— is still living, in his eighty-sixth year, the Presiding Bishop of the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. He was long a neighbor, and always an intimate friend of Mr. Clay, and I have recently had some interesting anecdotes of the great Kentuckian from the lips of this venerated prelate. He remembers well when Mr. Clay first expressed to him his desire to become a member of the Church, and to be admitted to its ordinances. In relation to his baptism, he remembers that immersion was offered to him, as conformable to the usages of his father's denomination, and not inconsistent with those of the Episcopal Church; but Mr. Clay replied at once, that he had no disposition whatever to stand upon forms, or to deviate in any way from the customs of the Church which he was about to join, and that he preferred to submit himself implicitly to the Bishop's discretion.

How far the death of his dear son, Colonel Henry Clay, Jr., at the battle of Buena Vista, a few months before, may have induced Mr. Clay no longer to defer fulfilling the desire he had expressed so many years previously, can be known only to the Searcher of all hearts. But from 1847 he was a communicant of the Episcopal Church, and a frequent worshipper at the Rev. Dr. Butler's

Church in Washington, where Webster of Massachusetts, and Berrien of Georgia, and Badger of North Carolina, and Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina, — to name no others, — were to be found at the Communion Table together from time to time. Dr. Butler attended Mr. Clay in his last illness, and published an interesting and impressive account of his partaking of the Lord's Supper a short time before his death.

And thus this great American Statesman left an example of faith, as well as of patriotism, more precious than all the services he ever rendered, or all the honors he ever enjoyed or coveted. In days like these, when so many influences are in the way of diverting both young and old from religious associations and ordinances, as well as from a just discharge of their political obligations, such an example of love of country and of belief in Christianity may well be commended to consideration.

I can close this imperfect sketch with nothing more appropriate than the concluding passage of a Eulogy on Mr. Clay, by his eloquent and admirable colleague in the Senate for some years, afterwards the Attorney-General of the United States, John James Crittenden, of Kentucky, — a kindred spirit, of less ambition, but of hardly inferior power: —

"Glorious as his life was, there was nothing that became him like the leaving of it. I saw him frequently during the slow and lingering disease which terminated his life. He was conscious of his approaching end, and prepared to meet it with all the resignation and fortitude of a Christian hero. He was all patience, meekness, and gentleness; these shone round him like a mild, celestial light, breaking upon him from another world; —

> "And, to add greater honors to his age
> Than man could give, he died fearing God."

August, 1879.

Henry Clay, born April 12, 1777, was married, in April, 1799, to Lucretia Hart, daughter of Thomas Hart, originally of North Carolina, and afterwards of Lexington, Kentucky. She was born March 19, 1781, and died April 6, 1864.

Their children were: —

1. Henrietta Clay, born June 25, 1800; died June 4, 1801.
2. Theodore Wythe Clay, born July 3, 1802; died May 5, 1870.
3. Thomas Hart Clay, born September 22, 1803; married Mary Russell Mentelle, daughter of French emigrants, who had been long settled in Kentucky; their living children are Henry B. Clay, Thomas H. Clay, who resides in Lexington, Kentucky, and Mary R. Clay: the father died March 18, 1871.
4. Susan Hart Clay, born February 14, 1805; married Martin Duralde of Louisiana, and had two children, of whom neither is now living; died in 1825.
5. Ann Brown Clay, born April 15, 1807; married James Erwin, and had six children, of whom none are now living; died November, 1835.
6. Lucretia Hart Clay, born February, 1809; died June 18, 1823.
7. Henry Clay, Jr., born April 10, 1811; married Julia Grather, October 10, 1832; and had three children. Of the two sons, Henry died while an aide-de-camp to the Union General Rousseau, and Thomas Julian died while an aide-de-camp to the Confederate General Buckner, during the late Civil War. The father was killed at the battle of Buena Vista, February 23, 1847. The daughter married Henry C. McDowell, and is living with a number of children.
8. Eliza H. Clay, born July 5, 1813; died August 11, 1827.
9. Laura Clay, born October 16, 1815; died January 5, 1817.
10. James B. Clay, born November 9, 1817; died January 26, 1864.
11. John M. Clay, the only surviving child of Henry Clay, born February 21, 1821; married Josephine Russell Erwin, has no children, and resides on a portion of the original Ashland estate of his father.

Ashland, the home of the illustrious statesman, is now owned by the Kentucky University.

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